



**REASON & REVELATION**  
*A Monthly Journal of Christian Evidences*

OCTOBER 2016 • VOL. 36 • NO. 10

# ATHEISM & FREE WILL



U.S.  
Presidents  
on Islam

*AP Weekend  
Seminars*



### Article In Brief... GOD

**The concept of atheism fails to account for many things that exist in the world. According to atheism, the material world is all there is. If that is the case, then everything must have a materialistic, naturalistic explanation. Human free will defies a naturalistic explanation. If humans really do make their own decisions, atheism cannot be true.**

**R**ENOWNED atheist Carl Sagan began his immensely popular book *Cosmos* with these words: “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.”<sup>1</sup> What do today’s atheists mean when they use the term *Cosmos*? The modern “scientific” idea is that the *Cosmos* is completely, entirely, and altogether materialistic, composed of matter and energy, and contains nothing immaterial or “not-matter.” The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines “materialism” as, “The theory that physical matter is the only reality and that everything, including thought, feeling, mind, and will, can be explained in terms of matter and physical phenomena.”<sup>2</sup> As it now stands, the ideas of the *Cosmos* or of “nature” have been redefined to include only **physical** matter and energy. Evolutionists Hewlett and Peters demand that “to be scientific

in our era is to search for **solely natural explanations**.”<sup>3</sup> Physicist Paul Davies correctly stated, “The materialist believes that mental states and operation are nothing but physical states and operations.”<sup>4</sup> Evolutionary biologist Richard Lewontin admitted that evolutionists “have a prior commitment, a commitment to naturalism.... Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine foot in the door.”<sup>5</sup>

What are the logical implications of the idea that everything in the Universe consists solely of matter and energy? At first glance, the materialistic idea may not seem very profound or Earth shattering, but a deeper probe into the concept reveals that some of the most fundamental aspects of humanity are at stake. In this article, we focus on one feature of humanity that must be denied if materialism is

accepted: human free will. You see, if matter and energy are all that “really” exists, then the notion must be rejected that there is a human will that directs the decision-making process. In short, if you, as a person, have ever made a single real decision; if you have ever freely chosen to do or not do anything, then atheism cannot be true. This is the case because your decision would be the result of something “more than” matter. It could not be explained by a naturalistic “cause and effect” chain of chemical events. If there is a “you” inside your body that freely chooses this or rejects that, then the materialist understanding of the Universe is false.

Modern leaders in the atheistic community admit as much. Sam Harris, recognized in skeptical circles as one of the four leading voices of modern atheism, penned a book titled *Free Will*. In that short volume, he wrote: “Free will is an illusion. Our wills are simply not of our own making.... We do not have the freedom we think we have.”<sup>6</sup> He further stated, “I cannot determine my wants.... My mental life is given to me by the cosmos.”<sup>7</sup> Again, “People feel (or presume) an authorship of their thoughts and actions that is illusory.”<sup>8</sup> And, “What I will do next, and why, remains, at bottom, a mystery—one that is fully determined by the prior state of the universe and the laws of nature (including the contributions of chance).”<sup>9</sup> As he begins to summarize his views toward the end of the book, he says, “You will do whatever it is you do, and it is meaningless to assert that you could have done otherwise.”<sup>10</sup>

Why does Harris demand that free will is non-existent? His commitment to materialism paints him

into this corner, which is obvious from his statement: "In improving ourselves and society, we are working directly with the forces of nature, for there is nothing but nature itself to work with."<sup>11</sup> On the second-to-last page he writes, "Am I free to change my mind? Of course not. It can only change me."<sup>12</sup>

There are striking ironies in the position that Harris and others take as they deny their own free will and their readers' as well. First, why in the world would these men write books and articles in an attempt to persuade anyone to believe their "no free will" position if the reader cannot decide for himself to change his mind? What is the point of trying to convince a person who believes in free will, if that "belief" is nothing more than the consequence of the cause-and-effect, natural processes that are banging around in his brain? If the reader does not have the ability to choose his or her belief, what is the point of trying to "show" the superiority of the "no-free-will" position? According to Harris and crew, you believe what you believe because of the physics of the Cosmos working in your brain, and how in the world words on a page could change those physics would indeed be a mystery worth uncovering. The fact that modern atheists are writing books to convince people that there is no free will belies the undeniable fact that humans have free will.

Second, Harris' concluding statement brings to light another glaring difficulty in the no-free-will position. He says, "Am I free to change my mind? Of course not. It can only change *me*."<sup>13</sup> Wait just a minute. Who is the "I" or the "me" in the sentence? If there is no free

will, and humans are simply the combined total of the physical processes at work in their brains, then there should be nothing more than the "mind" in Harris' sentence. The fact that he can differentiate between "himself" and his "mind" shows that there is something more at work than determinism. A purely physical entity such as a rock or atom does not have the ability to think in terms of "I" or "me." In truth, that Harris is conscious of an "I" or of a "self" contradicts his claim that free will does not exist.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, it seems humorous and superfluous for people such as Harris to write an "Acknowledgements" section in their books. Why thank people and acknowledge their contributions to your work if they could not have done otherwise? He writes, "I would like to thank my wife and editor, Annaka Harris, for her contributions to *Free Will*. As is always the case, her insights and recommendations greatly improved the book. I don't know how she manages to raise our daughter, work on her own projects, and still have time

to edit my books—but she does. I am extremely lucky and grateful to have her in my corner."<sup>15</sup> That's all well and good, but since she has no free will, she didn't choose to help Sam. It was thrust upon her by the nature of the Cosmos. Why thank a person who stays with you and helps you due to no choice or decision of her own, but due to an unalterable course of cause-and-effect actions in her brain? Why not thank the computer that "typed the words so faithfully as I hit the key strokes," or the oxygen that "so generously entered my lungs and allowed my cells to function," or the light that "so gracefully bounced from the screen (or page) to my eye, allowing me to see"? That Harris thanks his wife and not his computer gets to the point that there is something very different about the two entities. You thank a person because that person helped you (but could have chosen to do otherwise).

On February 12, 1998, William Provine, a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the distinguished

**Reason & Revelation** is published monthly by Apologetics Press, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Montgomery, AL. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to **Reason & Revelation**, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117; **ISSN:** [1542-0922] **USPS#** 023415.

**Apologetics Press** is a non-profit, tax-exempt work dedicated to the defense of New Testament Christianity. Copyright © 2016. All rights reserved.

**Editor:**

Dave Miller, M.A., M.Div., M.A.R., Ph.D.\*  
(\*Communication, Southern Illinois University)

**Associate Editor:**

Jeff Miller, M.S., Ph.D.\*  
(\*Biomechanical Engineering, Auburn University)

**Annual Subscription Rates:**

\$12.00	Domestic
\$10.00	Domestic Bulk (5+ to same address)
\$12.00	Canada & Overseas (plus shipping)

**General inquiries, changes of address,  
or international callers:**

Phone: (334) 272-8558  
Fax: (334) 270-2002

**Orders:**

Phone: (800) 234-8558  
Fax: (800) 234-2882

On-line Web store/catalog, subscription order/renewal form, current issues, archives, and other information (all orders processed on a secure server):

URL: [www.ApologeticsPress.org](http://www.ApologeticsPress.org)  
URL: [espanol.ApologeticsPress.org/espanol](http://espanol.ApologeticsPress.org/espanol)  
E-mail: [mail@ApologeticsPress.org](mailto:mail@ApologeticsPress.org)

**Discovery—Scripture & Science for**

**Kids** is a sister publication for children. For more information, please contact our offices or visit the Discovery Web site at:  
URL: [www.DiscoveryMagazine.com](http://www.DiscoveryMagazine.com)

Cornell University, took to the podium on the campus of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He was invited to deliver the keynote address at the second annual Darwin Day, a day dedicated to commemorating the life and teachings of Charles Darwin. In an abstract of that speech on the Darwin Day Web site, Dr. Provine's introductory comments are recorded in the following words: "Naturalistic evolution has clear consequences that Charles Darwin understood perfectly. 1) No gods worth having exist; 2) no life after death exists; 3) no ultimate foundation for ethics exists; 4) no ultimate meaning in life exists; and 5) **human free will is nonexistent.**"<sup>16</sup> Provine's ensuing message centered on his fifth statement regarding the lack of human free will.

Several years later, Provine continued to hold to this position. He appeared in the Ben Stein documentary *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* in 2008. In his discussion about Darwinian evolution, he said, "It starts by giving up an active deity, then it gives up the hope that there is any life after death. When you give those two up, the rest of it follows fairly easily. You give up the hope that there is an imminent morality. **And finally, there's no human free will. If you believe in evolution, you can't hope for there being any free will.** There's no hope whatsoever in there being any deep meaning in life. We live, we die, and we're gone."<sup>17</sup> The late Nobel Prize winner Francis Crick concurred with Provine. He wrote in his book *The Astonishing Hypothesis*: "You,' your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of

a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules."<sup>18</sup>

In his million-copy international best-selling book *The Selfish Gene*, renowned atheistic writer and speaker Richard Dawkins explained the evolutionary ideas that force atheism to deny human free will. He asserted that humans are "survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve selfish molecules known as genes."<sup>19</sup> Since Dawkins views humans as a compilation of physical genes fighting for survival, he must insist that these genes instinctively strive to live and pass on their information. That being the case, every human action must then be a product of the physical "gene" forces at work in the human body and brain. Human actions cannot be the result of some type of personality or free will according to this notion. In his attempt to flesh out his view more thoroughly and give answers to behaviors that have traditionally been attributed to human free will, he expounds on the selfish gene idea: "This gene selfishness will usually give rise to selfishness in individual behaviour."<sup>20</sup> When explaining the relationships that survival machines (humans) have with each other, he stoically quips:

To a survival machine, another survival machine (which is not its own child or another close relative) is part of its environment, like a rock or a river or a lump of food. It is something that gets in the way, or something that can be exploited. It differs from a rock or a river in one important respect; it is inclined to hit back. This is because it too is a machine that holds its immortal genes in trust for the future, and it too will stop at nothing to preserve them.<sup>21</sup>

Dawkins' ultimate explanation for human behavior is that we do not choose the way we relate to each other, but are driven by our genes to use or exploit other humans to produce the greatest chance to pass on genetic information.

It is often the case that many atheists attempt to distance themselves from the views of Dawkins, Harris, and other free-will-deniers. They contend that, even though they are atheists, they still believe that humans have free will and choose their own behavior. They do this because they know, deep down in their heart of hearts, that they have chosen their behaviors in the past. The problem with their mode of operation, however, is that atheism **necessarily implies** that free will cannot exist. If humans actually make their own, personal decisions, then something must be at work that is more than nature—which is over and above the natural, physical movement of atoms. There must be a human mind, or soul, or spirit that is supernatural—that controls the movement of the physical body. A person can choose atheism, or he can accept human free will, but not both and still be logically consistent.

Atheist Dan Barker, prolific debater and author, feels the tension between atheism's denial of free-will and the fact that humans know that they make personal choices. His solution is simply to redefine the term free will. In his debate with Peter Payne, Barker stated: "I happen to think that we have the **illusion** of freewill.... I'm a strict determinist. We are natural creatures. The material world is all there is. We **actually don't have** what we would call libertarian free-will."<sup>22</sup> In his book, *godless*, Barker stated: "I am a determinist, which

means that I don't think complete libertarian free will exists. Since we don't know the future...we have the illusion of free will, which to me is what 'free will' actually means." Barker recognizes that humans certainly feel like they make decisions, but his atheism demands that they cannot do so. In order to hang on to his atheism, and allow for "free will," he changes the definition of free will to "thinking that you are actually making a free will choice when you are not."<sup>23</sup>

Barker is not the only atheist that is forced to turn to this "illusion of free will" idea. Anthony Cashmore, biologist at the University of Pennsylvania, penned an article alleging that human free will does not exist. He wrote: "It is my belief that, as more attention is given to the mechanisms that govern human behavior, it will increasingly be seen that the concept of free will is an illusion."<sup>24</sup> According to Cashmore, you are reading this article because your genes and your environment have forced you to. You are not responsible for your decision to read this article, and based on your alleged evolutionary history and your environment, you could not choose to be doing anything different than what you are doing now. You are literally a slave to your genes and your environment. As Cashmore wrote: "[A]n individual cannot be held responsible for either his genes or his environment. From this simple analysis, surely it follows that individuals cannot logically be held responsible for their behavior."<sup>25</sup>

One of the most damaging lines of reasoning against the illusion idea put forth by Barker and Cashmore is the way in which these men attempt to convince their readers of its truth. Cashmore used

five-and-a-half pages to argue that our society should disregard the outdated concept that humans are responsible for their behavior. Barker has been in more than 80 moderated debates attempting to bring people over to his view. But if Cashmore and Barker are right, then there is no way we can disregard the concept of free will, due to the simple fact that we did not choose it in the first place. If humans are not responsible for their beliefs or behaviors, then the generally held concept of free will is nothing more than an evolutionary, environmental by-product. According to their line of thinking, if we believe in free will at the present, and act on that belief, we are not responsible for it. If they are right, why in the world would they attempt to urge the scientific community to change its mind about free will, if the community does not have the power to change its mind? Why spend time and effort arguing against free will, if your audience does not have the freedom to choose to accept or reject your reasoning anyway? The fatal flaw of the "no free will" argument is that it demands that the person making the argument has the free will to do so, and it tacitly assumes the parties evaluating the argument have the power to accept or reject it.

If humans are survival machines that cannot make any real choices, then all "persuasive" arguments would be worthless. Those who believe in God are programmed and forced by their genes to do so. Those who believe there is no God are equally products of their bodily physics. If humans don't change their minds, but, as Harris claims, their minds change them, then why attempt to **change** believers' minds, since they don't really have

"minds" and their brains are going to "believe" whatever their genes tell them anyway? Atheists actually have to **assume** free will in order even to discuss the topic. It's as if they are saying, "I want you to turn your eyes to look at me so that I can show you that you really can't see anything."

Television personality Bill Nye the "Science Guy" found himself in a terrible quandary when asked about human free will. In a video on the subject titled, "Hey Bill Nye, Do Humans Have Free Will?" he stated: "But clearly, I know I have made decisions based on things that happened around me that I wouldn't have made without being informed by history or what I noticed. I know I have. Now if that turns out not to be true, I'd be very surprised."<sup>26</sup> Near the end of the video, however, he then backtracks and claims that our decisions really are the result of the quantum physics at work in our brains. Then he claims: "At some level there is randomness in what we think, because we are made of chemicals that have randomness." Then he said, "I mean, I don't mean to skirt your question."<sup>27</sup> Actually, skirting the question was exactly what he was doing. He has to admit that he makes choices, but his atheistic naturalism forces him to back peddle and attribute those "choices" to chemistry and physics. His video is the epitome of atheism's failure to deal with the fact of human free will.

In June of 2015, evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne delivered a lecture at the Imagine No Religion convention in Vancouver, Canada. His speech was titled, "You Don't Have Free Will." It is one of the clearest examples of the new age atheistic position. Based on his atheistic beliefs, he argues for a purely deterministic world in

(cont. on p. 116)

# Christian Apologetics

Involves more than what you might think

## Weekend Seminars



### Kyle Butt



### Eric Lyons

#### Creation vs. Evolution

A Seminar that Examines the Creation/Evolution Controversy  
in Light of Reason and Revelation



- Creation Makes Sense
- Dinosaurs: The Poster Children of Evolution (Parts 1 & 2)
- Creation: In Six Days, or Six Billion Years?

- Design Demands a Designer
- Evolutionary Hoaxes Exposed
- The Fruits of Atheism



#### Is the Bible Reliable?

A Seminar that Examines the Inspiration and Reliability of the Bible



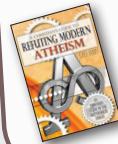
- Predictive Prophecy
- Archaeology and the Bible
- The Scientific Accuracy of the Bible



- Is the Bible a Book of Blunders?
- Why Does a Reliable Bible Matter?
- Hearing God in the 21st Century

#### Answering Atheism

A Seminar that Answers Modern Atheism's Attacks:



- Is the God of the Old Testament Immoral?
- Hell, Eternal Punishment, and Love
- Evil, Pain, and Suffering
- The Bible and Slavery



#### Scripture, Science, and Common Sense: 3 Votes for God

*Atheism Cannot Rationally Explain...*

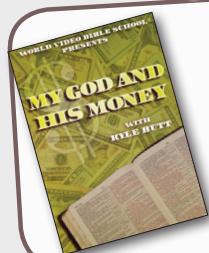
- The Origin of the Universe
- The Origin of Life
- The Origin of Design

*...Theism Can*



#### My God and His Money

A Seminar on Giving



- Stewardship
- Purpose in Your Heart
- Benefits of Giving Liberally
- Money: Powerful & Dangerous
- Proof of Your Love
- Sowing & Reaping

#### A Closer Look at Christ

A Seminar that Examines the Historicity and Deity of Christ

- Did Jesus Ever Really Live?
- Jesus: Unique Savior or Average Fraud?
- Answering Attacks on Jesus' Deity
- The Resurrection of Christ
- Was Jesus Really God?
- The Return of Christ



#### "Do Not Be Conformed"

A Seminar that Challenges Today's Teens to Embrace Holiness and Deny Ungodliness

- Why are You Here?
- Confronting Cultural Confusion
- Integrity Matters
- Input in an iChristian Age



To book a seminar, contact:

Apologetics Press, Inc.  
230 Landmark Dr.  
Montgomery, AL 36117  
Phone: (800) 234-8558  
E-Mail: mail@apologeticspress.org



# Weekend Seminars



## Dr. Dave Miller

### The Silencing of God



- Was America founded as a "Christian nation"?
- Did the Founding Fathers advocate "separation of church and state"?
- What can Christians do to preserve our nation?

### America's Most Pressing Concern



- Sequel to "The Silencing of God"
- Did the Founders believe the Republic depends on citizen acknowledgement of Jesus Christ?

### Islam and New Testament Christianity



- Does the Quran possess the attributes of inspiration?
- Are Christianity and Islam compatible?
- What should Christians do?



### Must Churches of Christ Change?



#### Should Worship Assemblies Include...

- Instrumental Music?
- Female Worship Leaders?
- Handclapping?
- Lifting Up Hands?
- Baby Dedications?
- Praise Teams?

### Has the Bible Been Corrupted?



- How do we know the Bible was transmitted accurately?
- Can we be sure we have the Bible as God intended it?

### A Trip Through the Bible



- A captivating trip through the entire Bible to provide a condensed, sequential narrative

### Can We Know That God Exists?



- Can We Believe and Know?
- Decisive Proof that God Exists
- Design Demands a Designer

### The End Times



- Will there be a "Rapture," "Tribulation," "Battle of Armageddon," "Antichrist," and "Millennium"?

### Why People Suffer?



- Why does suffering occur? Only the Bible can give us an accurate explanation for the existence of pain and suffering.



## Dr. Jeff Miller

### Evolution is Unscientific



- Evolution vs. the Laws of Science  
Do the laws of science support the naturalistic evolutionary model or the Creation model?
- Evolution's "Evidence"  
Does the alleged "evidence" for evolution pass the science test?
- Why Be an Atheist?  
If the evidence is so decisive, why do so many reject it?

### Creation is Scientific



- The Creation Model: Scripture and Science  
What is the biblical Creation model, and is there evidence for it?
- Is the Creation Model Scientifically Defensible Today?
- Why Be a Christian?  
Is the Christian life worth it, considering the things one must give up to live it?

### Stage IV Culture Cancer



#### A Seminar that Examines Society's Attack on Biblical Morality and the Home



- Symptoms of the Disease  
Adultery, homosexuality, abortion, and other cultural signs that Scripture says lead to a bad prognosis for the survival of a society.
- Causes of the Disease  
If, like Satan, my goal was to infect society with widespread sin, what would I do? Seven dangerous and widespread "ism's" he's using.
- Metastasis: Spreading the Disease  
What is the most effective way to cause the rapid spread of the disease throughout society? Target the home. Biblical principles on dating, marriage, gender roles, and child rearing.
- Treatment: Sending the Disease into Remission  
What treatment should be given to send culture's spiritual cancer into remission?

Dr. Dave Miller, Kyle Butt, Eric Lyons, and Dr. Jeff Miller comprise the full-time writing and speaking staff at Apologetics Press. Full-time and auxiliary speakers/writers are faithful Christians who hold a combined 20+ graduate level degrees in relevant scientific and religious areas, including several doctoral degrees. These men speak in dozens of cities, across multiple states and countries each year. See [www.apologeticspress.org/AboutAP.aspx](http://www.apologeticspress.org/AboutAP.aspx) for more info on A.P. and the speaking/writing staff.

which human free will is nothing more than physical processing at work, molecules moving to the beat of the laws of physics. Addressing his primarily atheistic audience, he says, “Now many of you don’t accept that. You don’t believe that **you are robots made out of meat**, which is what I’m going to try to convince you of today.” He takes this position, because if atheism is true, and there is nothing supernatural, then (as he says), “Our behavior is absolutely determined by the laws of physics.”<sup>28</sup>

Coyne takes serious issue with his fellow atheists who claim to be naturalists and determinists, but who attempt to say that humans do have some kind of free will. He correctly shows that atheistic naturalism cannot permit **any type** of free will. Those atheists who are trying to accommodate both ideas, according to Coyne, are simply playing “semantic tricks” trying to convince people “that we are still okay even though we are meat robots.”<sup>29</sup> Coyne went on to say, “As Anthony Cashmore said, ‘We have no more free will than a bowl of sugar.’” Coyne then added his own words, “We are bowls of sugar, just very complicated ones.” Coyne does an excellent job of proving that atheism demands that human free will cannot exist. What he fails to do, however, is prove that free will does not exist. He claims it. He asserts it. But he cannot prove his false assertion. The reason for that is simply because humans really do have free will.

At one point in his speech, he attempted to deal with the biggest problem that the “no-free-will” idea encounters. He tried to tackle the question of why he would try to persuade anyone to believe his view, since, according to his view,

no one can choose any beliefs. His argument was that, just like kicking a dog teaches the dog to avoid harm, presenting the material he was presenting may “teach” a human to adopt his viewpoint, even though humans would just be reacting to his material, not choosing to believe it. So, Coyne says, “Why did I get out of bed this morning? I thought, I hope to persuade people, and that was determined by the laws of physics.” He goes on to say, “Even our very desire to try to change people’s minds. The fact that I’m up here trying to do this is determined by my own, you know, physical constitution and environment. That is the infinite regress and the sort of annoying thing about determinism. It’s turtles all the way down.”

Let’s analyze Coyne’s statement. Who is “annoyed” by this “infinite regress” of physics? Is it Coyne? Why, if he is just doing what his chemistry is forcing him to do, does he get “annoyed” at this? And who, exactly, is it that is getting annoyed at the situation? Is it Coyne’s physical, meat robot self? Obviously, the fact that he is “annoyed” speaks to there being something more to Coyne than molecules in motion.

### NO MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

**C**ONSIDER the chain of implications. First, if there is no God, then this material world must be all there is. There can be nothing supernatural. Second, if the physical world is all that exists, then all entities that are made of matter must be driven solely by physical laws. Third, since there is nothing supernatural (according to this view), then there can be nothing more-than-matter inside of humans that can choose anything. Free will cannot exist in an atheistic world. But do not stop

there. If humans cannot make decisions, then what is the necessary implication of that belief? What would that mean in regard to morality, crime, punishment, etc.? The necessary implication is that humans are not morally responsible for any of their behavior, any more than a rock, squirrel, or turtle is.

In Coyne’s speech, after making one of his points about most of his audience being determinists, he said, “Almost all of you here don’t believe in moral responsibility. Think about that.” He went on to say that because of his belief in determinism, “I don’t consider myself morally responsible, because I don’t have a choice.” Cashmore said the same when he stated, “From this simple analysis, surely it follows that individuals cannot logically be held responsible for their behavior.”<sup>30</sup> While the atheists who deny free will attempt to conjure up a world where no moral responsibility brings about a modern utopia, nothing could be further from the truth. The rapist blames his genes. The murderer blames his chemistry. The adulterer points the finger at his environment. The thief “cannot help himself.” The perjurer acted only in response to molecular motion in his brain. The school shooter followed his urge to kill as many students as possible. The suicide bomber could not have chosen otherwise. An environment saturated with such thinking would hardly be described as a utopia.

Along these lines, Coyne said, “Whether or not you are the kind of person who accepts other people’s notions of morality is something that you have no control over. And if you don’t, that’s something you don’t have any control over either.” Let that sink in. If you think it is

“morally” acceptable to fly a plane into a building in an attempt to kill as many people as possible, you could not think otherwise and you are not “morally” responsible for doing anything wrong. Truly, **the denial of moral responsibility is one of the most fallacious and harmful implications of the false idea of atheism.**

If we are to be “scientific” about these matters, we must take what we know to be the case and find the explanation that best fits the facts. If we are honest, each of us knows that we have freely chosen attitudes and behaviors. We know that we could have chosen differently. And we often feel the guilt of having chosen wrong, or the triumphant feeling of having chosen right. In all honesty, you know that you could choose to quit reading this article right now, or you could continue. Your freedom is not an illusion, but is an actuality: a statement of the way things really are, not the way they only seem to be. Since that is the case, we must take the fact—our free will—and find an explanation that best fits the fact. Atheism cannot account for human free will. Atheists who are consistent with their belief are forced to admit this is a logical implication of it. Therefore, if humans have free will, and atheism implies that they do not, then atheism is false. On the other hand, the idea of a supernatural God endowing humans with a mind, consciousness, and soul fits perfectly with the fact of human free will. Thus, the person who is trying to “follow the evidence where it leads” must conclude that human free will **proves** a supernatural Creator exists.

## WHY CHOOSE TO BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE NO CHOICE?

**A**S I have studied atheistic books and writings and watched several videos, I’ve tried to put my finger on why atheists do not want to believe they choose. They all admit that humans think we are free to choose, but they insist that we are not really choosing anything. They maintain that there is really no “Sam Harris” upstairs, or Jerry Coyne “in there somewhere.” They insist that “Richard Dawkins” is just another name for the physical molecules that make up a certain body, and that there is no real soul or personality of a non-material nature “in there.” If there really is such a thing as free will (and there is), why would a group of people choose to deny it in spite of the evidence that proves it exists? Why don’t they want to be viewed as free moral agents who deserve praise for their morally correct actions and who deserve blame for their moral failures? An exhaustive list of possible reasons why this is the cause is impossible, but Coyne did give us one very telling idea.

Near the end of Coyne’s speech, he attempted to explain the benefits he sees in adopting the idea that free will does not exist (not to be tedious, but keep in mind that he does not really think you can adopt it; instead, you are forced to accept whatever your chemistry determines). He said that a benefit of denying free will is that you would have a “lack of regret for bad things that happen. It takes away a certain amount of guilt feelings from you. You don’t have to beat yourself up over, ‘I should have done this instead of that.’” There you have it. Humans, from the beginning of Creation, have looked for ways to plead “not guilty” in the face of

their own sins. We have attempted to blame everyone else except ourselves for our moral failures. Humans have tried to blame God, their parents, their genes, their society, their spouses, their circumstances, and everything under the Sun for the selfish, sinful choices they have made. The next step with this approach is to say that, since we cannot choose our behavior, then “punishment is not justified for retribution (people get—or should get—what they deserve).”<sup>31</sup>

Notice the reasoning. If I can say that I cannot help myself (I **cannot** choose differently), then I do not have to feel guilty for the things I do wrong. Furthermore, if I did not choose the immoral actions that I committed, then neither society (nor God) can punish me for doing immoral things. Truly, the Proverbs writer accurately stated many years ago, “Evil men do not understand justice” (Proverbs 28:5). The atheistic position not only rejects the concept of free will, but then jettisons the concept of justice as well. Yet how acutely aware we humans are when injustice has been done to us.

In regard to the current situation, Romans 1 reads almost like a prophecy,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is evident in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead **so that they are without excuse**, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor

were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools (1:18-22, emp. added).

"I was just a meat robot." "My selfish genes drove me to...." "The physical properties in my brain forced me to act that way." "I could not have chosen differently so I'm not morally responsible." These and other empty excuses will not be accepted by the Maker on the Day of Judgment. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Carl Sagan (1980), *Cosmos* (New York: Random House), p. 4.
- <sup>2</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000), (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin), fourth edition.
- <sup>3</sup> Martinez Hewlett and Ted Peters (2006), "Theology, Religion, and Intelligent Design," in *Not in Our Classrooms*, ed. Eugenie Scott and Glenn Branch (Boston, MA: Beacon Press), p. 75, emp. added.
- <sup>4</sup> Paul Davies (1983), *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon & Schuster), p. 82.
- <sup>5</sup> Richard Lewontin (1997), "Billions and Billions of Demons," in *The New York Review of Books*, 44[1]:31, January 9.
- <sup>6</sup> Sam Harris (2012), *Free Will* (New York: Free Press), p. 5, italics in orig.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 19.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 24.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 40.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 44.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 63.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 65, italics in orig.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., italics in orig.
- <sup>14</sup> For an extended discussion of consciousness and Creation, see Bert Thompson and Brad Harrub (2004), "The Origin of Consciousness: Part 2," *Reason & Revelation*, 24[2]:9-15, <https://goo.gl/M9Drix>.

- <sup>15</sup> Harris, p. 67.
- <sup>16</sup> William Provine (1998), "Evolution: Free Will and Punishment and Meaning in Life," <http://eeb.bio.utk.edu/darwin/DarwinDay-ProvineAddress.htm>, emp. added.
- <sup>17</sup> Ben Stein and Kevin Miller (2008), *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* (Premise Media), emp. added.
- <sup>18</sup> Francis Crick (1994), *The Astonishing Hypothesis* (London: Simon and Schuster), p. 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Richard Dawkins (2006), *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press), 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition, p. xxi.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 2.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 66.
- <sup>22</sup> Dan Barker and Peter Payne (2005), "Does Ethics Require God?" [http://www.ffrf.org/about/bybarker/ethics\\_debate.php](http://www.ffrf.org/about/bybarker/ethics_debate.php).
- <sup>23</sup> Dan Barker (2008), *godless* (Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press), p. 128.
- <sup>24</sup> Anthony Cashmore (2010), "The Lucretian Swerve: The Biological Basis of Human Behavior and the Criminal Justice System," *PNAS*, 107:10, <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/02/04/0915161107.full.pdf+html>.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Bill Nye (2016), *Big Think*, "Hey Bill Nye, Do Humans Have Free

Will?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITdMa2bCaVc>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Jerry Coyne (2015), "You Don't Have Free Will," Imagine No Religion Convention, Vancouver, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ca7i-D4ddaw>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. All other quotes from Coyne's speech have the same bibliographic information unless otherwise noted.

<sup>30</sup> Cashmore.

<sup>31</sup> Coyne.

United States Postal Service STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, and CIRCULATION Required by 39 USC 3685 1. **REASON AND REVELATION**. 2. 1542-0922. 3. 8/29/2016. 4. Monthly. \$ 12. 6. \$12.00. 7. 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117. 8. 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117. 9. PUBLISHER, Apologetics Press, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117; EDITOR, Dave Miller, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117. 10. Non-profit Apologetics Press, Inc., 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117. 11. None. 12. No Change. 13. REASON AND REVELATION. 14. Oct 15'-Sept 16. 15. Religion/Apologetics (see chart below). 16. Electronic Copy Circulation (see chart below) 17. Oct. 18. Thomas Hatfield, General Manager, 8/29/16.

I 5.	Average	Current Actual Copies
A	3644	3294
B1	1811	1894
B2	74	77
B3	0	0
B4	710	673
C	2595	2644
D1	0	0
D2	0	0
D3	200	200
D4	200	200
E	400	200
F	2995	3044
G	649	250
H	3644	3294
I	87%	87%

I 6.	Average	Current Actual Copies
A	0	0
B	2595	2644
C	2995	3044
D	87%	87%

## SPEAKING SCHEDULES

### Kyle Butt

- |               |                 |                |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| October 14-16 | Spencer, WI     | (715) 659-4530 |
| October 23-26 | Florence, AL    | (256) 272-0350 |
| October 30    | Centerville, TN | (931) 729-5356 |

### Eric Lyons

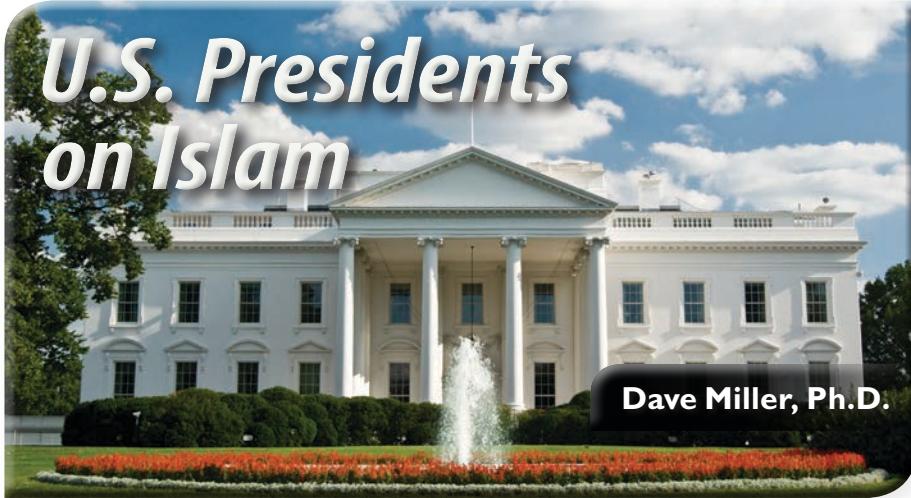
- |             |                 |                |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| October 3-6 | Martinsburg, WV | (304) 263-9249 |
| October 19  | Northport, AL   | (205) 339-6211 |

### Dave Miller

- |               |                   |                |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| October 7-9   | Jacksonville, FL  | (904) 264-2463 |
| October 14-16 | Fairbanks, AK     | (907) 460-4345 |
| October 23-25 | Meridianville, AL | (256) 828-3448 |
| October 26    | Huntsville, AL    | (256) 895-8717 |
| October 30    | Florence, AL      | (256) 757-5126 |

### Jeff Miller

- |            |                |                |
|------------|----------------|----------------|
| October 9  | Montgomery, AL | (334) 264-2985 |
| October 30 | Montgomery, AL | (334) 264-2985 |



# U.S. Presidents on Islam

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

"You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and **above all, the religion of Jesus Christ.** These will make you a greater and happier people than you are. Congress will do everything they can to assist you in this wise intention."<sup>1</sup>

"While we are zealously performing the duties of good Citizens and soldiers we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of Religion. To the distinguished Character of Patriot, **it should be our highest Glory to add the more distinguished Character of Christian.**"<sup>2</sup>

## THOMAS JEFFERSON AND JOHN ADAMS

"We took the liberty to make some inquiries concerning the grounds of their pretensions to make war upon nations who had done them no injury, and observed that we considered all mankind as our Friends who had done us no wrong, nor had given us any provocation. The Ambassador answered us that it was founded on the laws of their Prophet, that it was writ-

ten in their Koran that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that **it was their right and duty to make war upon them** wherever they could be found, and **to make slaves of all they could take as prisoners;** and that **every Musselman who should be slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise.**"<sup>3</sup>

## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

"In the seventh century of the Christian era, a wandering Arab of the lineage of Hagar, the Egyptian, combining the powers of transcendent genius, with the preternatural energy of a fanatic, and **the fraudulent spirit of an impostor,** proclaimed himself as a messenger from Heaven, and **spread desolation and delusion over an extensive portion of the earth.** Adopting from the sublime conception of the Mosaic law, the doctrine of one omnipotent God; he connected indissolubly with it, **the audacious falsehood, that he was himself his prophet and apostle.... [H]e**

declared **undistinguishing and exterminating war**, as a part of his religion, against all the rest of mankind.... The precept of the koran is, **perpetual war** against all who deny, that Mahomet is the prophet of God."<sup>4</sup>

## BARACK OBAMA

"Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism—it is an important part of promoting peace."<sup>5</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> George Washington (1779), "Speech to the Delaware Chiefs," in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 15:55, emp. added, <http://preview.tinyurl.com/Washington-G-1779>. The author assumes that Washington's belief in the priority of the Christian religion would apply to the Muslim as well as the Native American.

<sup>2</sup> George Washington (1778), "General Orders, May 2, 1778," *George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress*, emp. added, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgw3&fileName=mgw3g/gwpage003.db&recNum=181>. Again, it is assumed that, if Washington considered being a Christian a person's highest glory, being a Muslim would not be so considered.

<sup>3</sup> "American Peace Commissioners to John Jay" (1786), *The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 1. General Correspondence. 1651-1827*, Library of Congress, March 28, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib001849>.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Blunt (1830), *The American Annual Register for the Years 1827-8-9* (New York: E. & G.W. Blunt), 29:269, emp. added, <http://www.archive.org/stream/plamericanannual29blunuoft>.

<sup>5</sup> Barack Obama (2009), "Remarks by the President on a New Beginning," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt, June 4, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-cairo-university-6-04-09>.

**NOTE FROM***The Editor**Have You Considered Hosting an AP Seminar?*

In addition to publishing a host of books, articles, tracts, DVDs, CDs, and curricula, Apologetics Press also offers live seminars to churches and civic organizations around the country. These weekend seminars address the leading spiritual and moral issues of our day, including:

- The Bible Account of Creation
- Is Evolution Scientific?
- Dinosaurs
- Inspiration/Reliability of the Bible
- Historicity/Deity of Christ
- Atheism
- The Existence of God
- The End Times
- Transmission of the Bible
- Why People Suffer
- Christian Ethics
- The Home
- Islam
- Christian Worship
- The Spiritual Origins of America

AP speakers crisscross the country throughout the year presenting lectures to audiences of all ages. The benefits to those who attend are enormous—not the least of which is that faith in God is strengthened, confidence in the truth is increased, and determination to live the Christian life in view of eternity is enhanced.

In a day when the average Christian is constantly bombarded with information from a variety of morally and spiritually corrupt sources, the need has never been greater for people to hear the truth of God's views boldly articulated in a public venue.

Please consider spearheading the planning and implementation of an AP seminar in your community. The result will be seed sown for eternity.

**Dave Miller**

See Center Spread  
for More Details